

FISH & WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: August 26, 2014

Agenda Item: Future Fisheries Improvement Projects, Summer 2014 funding cycle

Division: Fisheries

Action Needed: Final Action

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

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Background

The Future Fisheries Improvement Program continues to provide funds for projects that restore fishery habitats in streams, rivers, and lakes for the benefit of wild fisheries. Applications are reviewed twice each year by a 14-member citizen panel appointed by the Governor. Citizen panel recommendations are forwarded to the F&W Commission every six months for consideration and approval. For the summer 2014 funding cycle, the citizen panel recommends funding 10 of 13 submitted proposals at a Program cost of \$261,376. Matching funds or in-kind contributions from outside sources total \$1,328,686.

Public Involvement Process & Results

The public is informed about program funding opportunities via news releases, a public meeting, and information posted on FWP's website. The citizen panel conducted a public meeting to review applications, discuss proposed projects with applicants in attendance, and receive public comment. No public comment was received at the meeting, except from applicants in attendance. All applications received for the funding cycle were posted on FWP's website, which allows viewers to submit comments on-line. An environmental assessment was individually prepared for seven of the 10 projects recommended for funding. The three exceptions either fell under a categorical exclusion (defined under ARM rule 12.2.454), the federal National Environmental Policy Act, or were part of a larger project where the EA was completed externally. The comment period for six of the seven drafted EA's ended Aug. 18; the final internal EA ended Aug. 25. No comments were received as of Aug. 12, when this cover sheet was prepared. A full update will be provided at the Aug. 26 Commission meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis

- A. The Commission could approve funding recommendations submitted by the citizen panel and as prioritized by the ranking committee. This alternative would provide funds to assist in the completion of projects that will improve habitat for wild fish populations.
- B. The Commission could disapprove or modify the recommendations of the citizen panel. Under this alternative, applicants would need to seek other sources of funding or suspend projects that otherwise would have benefited wild fish populations.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

FWP recommends that the Commission approve the funding recommendations as submitted by the Citizen Panel. Completion of these projects would benefit wild fish populations.

Proposed Motion

I move to approve the Future Fisheries Citizen Panel funding recommendations for the summer 2014 funding cycle of the Future Fisheries Improvement Program.